

# Bike path plan faces bumpy ride

## Easements, funding pose major hurdles for panel

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DUXBURY — Though supporting the principle of a pedestrian and bicycle path in town, members of the planning board last night said the goal may not be attainable.

Three members of the town path council brought a preliminary set of guidelines to the board last night. The board took no action and instead encouraged path advocates to draw up a route or several routes and begin the work of selling the plan to residents.

"The issue isn't would somebody like to have it, the issue is how would you do it," said planning board member William Zachmann. "The only way that's going to happen is to come up with a plan that says specifically how

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to do it, what are the trade-offs we have to make."

Zachmann and board member David Matthews cited a previous request by Chestnut Street residents who had hoped to build a sidewalk along their street but found that the sidewalk would either be too close to the road or too close to their homes.

In the plan outlined last night, members of the path council would have to ask homeowners' permission to run a six-foot path through their yards.

"Unfortunately in Duxbury, our houses aren't set that far back from the road," said planning board Chairman Peter Donahue. "The board is firmly behind the intent, but the implementation has always been a puzzle."

Despite the warnings, path council Chairman Donald Larose was unfazed.

"It will be very difficult. Getting to the moon was difficult, but they got there," he said.

Larose cited a 1996 town survey in which 64 percent of respondents said they would favor sidewalks or bike paths on major streets for pedestrian safety. Residents listed that goal as one for which they would pay higher taxes.

He also noted the town's 1999 comprehensive plan and the 1997 open space plan both include some kind of path.

Funds for a proposed route, however, were rejected at town meeting in the spring.

"We're looking at what took place at town meeting as a learning experience," Larose said. "We believe the town in general wants to see some kind of path or sidewalk, but what was proposed wasn't it."

Planning board members suggested that any plan will run into opposition once resi-

dents are asked to allow a path in their yard.

"We're all concerned about public safety," Matthews said. "I would love to see a bike path somewhere in town, but I wouldn't want to give a six-foot easement in my yard."

Larose found sympathy on the board when arguing that a path would make life easier for parents, who would no longer have to drive their children everywhere.

Planning board member Amy MacNab, who said she is an advocate of the idea, said she taught her children how to ride a bicycle in the cemetery because there is no other safe place to ride.

Based on the advice of the planning board, the path council will try to create a potential route and ask residents for reaction.

The council also wants residents to send any comments or suggested routes to: Town Path Council, P.O. Box 2526, Duxbury 02331.